United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Despite continuing absence of agreement on Western Sahara, Secretary-General says he will take "concrete steps" towards holding referendum at earliest possible date.

+ Secretary-General, in Geneva, meets with his Special Representative for Somalia and with Cyrus Vance, Co-Chairman of Yugoslav Conference.

+ General Assembly, as it suspends current session, approves controversial budget assessments for States of former Soviet Union; adopts 276 resolutions during main part of its forty-seventh session.

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Despite continuing absence of an agreement with the parties on the settlement plan for Western Sahara, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali says he feels obliged to "take concrete steps" towards the holding of the referendum for the Territory. He will therefore submit his report to the Security Council in the second half of January, setting forth the various steps necessary to hold the referendum at the earliest possible date.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council yesterday, the Secretary-General said he had postponed his report in order to await the results of the consultative meeting of tribal chiefs of Western Sahara, which was to be held in Geneva early December. However, the meeting was cancelled due to "discrepancies" with regard to the criteria for the identification of voters.

The Secretary-General wrote that he expects both parties to fully cooperate with him in order to organize the referendum in Western Sahara on the basis of agreements among all concerned on the major aspects of the settlement plan for the Territory.
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For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today in Geneva with his Special Representative for Somalia, Ismat T. Kittani, to discuss the preparations for the Conference for National Reconciliation in that country. He also met with the Co-Chairman of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance.

In separate news, a United Nations spokesman said today that Under-Secretary-General James O.C. Jonah would be leaving New York tomorrow evening, 25 December, for Tel Aviv, where he will meet with senior Israeli officials during the next 4-5 days.

The Secretary-General has decided to send Mr. Jonah as his Envoy to Israel to discuss the subject of the deportation last week of about 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories to southern Lebanon.

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The General Assembly, before suspending its current session, yesterday adopted recommendations concerning the rates of budget assessment of 15 member countries which were part of the former Soviet Union, and three States which were part of the former Yugoslavia, as well as San Marino.

That matter is of particular concern to the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union, many of which have insisted that their rate of assessment should be determined on an individual basis in accordance with their capacity to pay as sovereign nations and not in terms of the assessment of the former Soviet Union, as recommended by the Committee of Contributions.

Under another resolution adopted yesterday, the Assembly established a Peace-keeping Reserve Fund of $150 million to be used, under the authority of the Secretary-General, to advance sums for unforeseen, new, renewed or expanded peace-keeping operations, as well as for the start-up costs of new operations.

The Assembly reaffirmed its own role by stressing that the Secretariat's restructuring should be carried out in close consultations with Member States. It also urged the Secretary-General to further encourage member countries to meet their financial obligations in respect of outstanding contributions to the regular budget and to all peace-keeping operations.

During the main part of its current session, the Assembly held a total of 94 meetings and adopted a total of 276 resolutions: 201 without a vote and 75 with a recorded vote.

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